

Florence Township Council Executive Session 03/10/21

Florence, New Jersey
March 10, 2021

The Florence Township Council held a executive session meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting electronically, in person attendance was not encouraged.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Garganio at 7:00 p.m. Council President Garganio led the Salute to the Flag.

The Opening Statement was read by the township clerk: This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was published in the Burlington County Times on January 10, 2021; placed on the Township website, and given to the Trenton Times for information.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Paul Ostrander, Jerry Sandusky, Dave Woolston, Bruce Garganio

Also Present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie, Stephen Fazekas, Township Administrator; Ted Wilkinson, Township Engineer; Kelly Grant, Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk

Absent: None

FIFTEEN (15) MINUTES OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Melanie Mieczkowski, 1001 West Fourth Street, asked if there were any future plans for the new path connecting the Oak Mill development to the municipal park? President Garganio stated that the plan is to do a tree planting out there and let it go back to nature.

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, asked if a URL could be added to the press release on the website to allowing one-click access to the site? The Mayor explained that sometimes the press release ends up being a scan and that is why it is not a working URL. He will check into this for future press releases.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, a motion by Sandusky and a second by Ostrander to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – all ayes.

NEW BUSINESS

A. State Plan for Route 130

Mayor Wilkie discussed the Route 130 Delaware River Corridor Plan Endorsement. He and Administrator Fazekas attended the virtual workshop and there is still some work that needs to get done. He has recommended that we bring on Mark Remsa, who has the experience he believes that we need in order to make sure this works through. He shared some slides of the work that will be required and those involved, which includes the State, the County, Municipalities and the Board of Commissioners from the County.

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The Mayor went on to explain the timeline: the first endorsement was back in April of 1999 to create a corridor for various municipalities to help each other out, which was a high priority. In 2009 the timeline was extended into 2019. The continuation of it started in March 2020 and then COVID hit, which extended it another year. In the summer of 2020, the Burlington County Bridge Commission staff was reduced by half and by fall 2020 the Bridge Commission drafted a visible assessment report and, inevitably in November 2020 they decided that they were going to scale themselves back. In December 2020 we received a questionnaire which we submitted in February 2021 and some of that work has been started.

He explained that they want an advisory committee appointed by the Mayor by Resolution. We had a great team back in 2012 but we did away with all of the subcommittees and collapsed them into the Environmental Commission. The goal is to work with the Environmental Commission and possibly some other folks within the community that will need to get involved. We have to submit resolutions and meet with the state to discuss the state planning map.

The Mayor also went on to share the Route 130 Florence-Columbus Road Improvement presentation for Council and those in attendance which highlighted the proposed changes along the Route 130 corridor. After the presentation he explained that this is the next step and it will hopefully help to make it easier for our residents getting in and out of town. This does not address our concerns with truck traffic and how they are getting in our town and it has been mentioned before that Burlington Township is trying to create a bypass and if they are successful, they would support our request to declassify Delaware Avenue and Front Street.

He shared with Council a County study that came out in June of 2018, which showing how the bypass would connect to Daniels Way near the Burlington Coat Factory warehouse in Burlington Township. This will allow traffic to flow through to get out to Route 130 as opposed to using Dulty's Lane which, from what the traffic studies are saying, is overused to capacity.

He said that another possibility that could help with Delaware Avenue and Front Street is a connector road from Cedar Lane to John Galt Way that will come in Route 130 to John Galt Way and the trucks would then have access to our Cedar Lane industrial center. It would eliminate the need for any trucks to come in on Delaware Avenue to get to that industrial center. This is another reason why we hope to get the state plan endorsement to get the funding.

Council President Garganio asked about the River Road bypass and whether the funding is coming from Burlington Township because it is in Burlington Township and Mayor Wilkie confirmed. Council President Garganio then asked if we could get a breakdown as to where we stand with that so we can factor into an overall financial plan. He is assuming that they are going to have to reach out to us because it will help Florence Township with the road patterns and truck traffic so that we can maximize and maybe build out a five-year plan of where we may have to be on some of these things.

Mayor Wilkie stated that Administrator Fazekas had conversations with Burlington Township not too long ago and he is sure that they will be willing to share that with us.

Council President Garganio asked our engineer to possibly run numbers on the Railroad Avenue extension so we can get an update on it. It may be something that we should look at now since we are looking at a global fix for some of these issues.

Township Engineer Ted Wilkinson agreed to get the numbers together for Council.

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B. Soil Removal Request, 290 Daniels Way, Whitesell

Administrator Fazekas stated that we received a request from Whitesell who is to put up a warehouse of about 130,000 square feet which was approved in 2009. They are requesting permission from Florence Township to move about 9,000 cubic yards of dirt from 290 Daniels Way to 250 Daniels Way, which is actually in Burlington Township. There is also another 5,500 cubic yards from Daniels Way that they want to remove from the township to a site to be determined. He had email communication with their civil engineer, Steven Taylor who said that the soil has not been tested. Chapter 20 of our Ordinance states that they would have to pay for permits but Council has the right to waive that. The permits would cost them \$725 total. Also, speaking with our Township Engineer, we can request bonding for the soil removal. He confirmed with Ted Wilkinson that the bonding should be \$100,000. He said he would recommend a bond to assure compliance with street sweeping, cleaning, and any issues with the roads failing with the removal of almost 800 truckloads of material and he would want some type of bond in place to make sure that if an issue arose, Whitesell would be the responsible party.

Administrator Fazekas stated that also in the Ordinance under Chapter 20, Council has the right to request the soil but he is not sure if we are going to want to request soil if it has not been tested, even though he believes we could use it. At next week's Council meeting we will be awarding the demolition of the Pinto property on Hornberger Avenue, where we could backfill on that site. He has contacted the EPA and they don't have any use for the soil right now but if Council wanted to store some there for future use, we would have to let them know. They are definitely going to request sampling. Because there are options in the Ordinance about Council waiving certain things, he wants to leave that to Council to decide, or they could table this to have some more time to think about it.

Council President Garganio said that in the conversation with EPA years ago, they did not want anything brought on to the site because of the different contamination levels. He said that if the soil was found to be clean, and it could be put out on that site, we may be able to use it along the walking path/Heritage Trail and have a nice little area along the river, not just going to be a walking path straight through, and it could also be an area where people could enjoy. If the soil is good, we should make use of it.

Councilman Woolston stated that he doesn't believe Whitesell will move this soil until it has been tested. If it is contaminated, they are not going to move it to another site and risk contamination to that site as well.

At this point the matter will be tabled and as soon as the details are worked out it will be brought back to Council.

Administrator Fazekas stated that he included a letter in the packets for the Fire District. He will go over it in detail with Council when the budget is complete. We are going to be helping them with the purchasing of some equipment but because their budget is not going to be approved until April with the election, they had to get a letter from the Township for DCA purposes.

He also mentioned that the Fire District has requested that one of the two police Tahoes that are no longer being used as police vehicles be sent over to them. The second vehicle will stay in house. They are aware of the condition of the vehicle we are going to be sending over and if Council agrees he would like to get a Resolution next week to get that Tahoe turned over to them.

Administrator Fazekas explained that we have been working with Project Freedom and recommended a Memorandum of Understanding be drafted for Council to review for next week's meeting, to have the

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MOU available to go before Judge Covert the following week. Solicitor Grant will draft the memorandum.

Lastly, he mentioned that the fire lines in the warehouses in the township have to be tested and pressure tested, which is starting to create manpower issues. He would like to have the Ordinance amended for the fire flow pressure testing. There will be a permit required and it will be \$1,000 for any water mains that are 8" in diameter or larger for a 2-hour test. Water mains that are less than 8" would be \$500. If the test goes beyond the 2 hours, we will charge them an additional \$150 per hour. This testing can only be conducting Monday through Thursday between the hours of 8AM and 1PM. And, unless it is an extreme circumstance and they get permission, testing will not be allowed to be done during June, July and August because if we get into a drought situation, we do not want them using the water for their testing. Florence and Burlington Townships would like to be unified in doing this. Burlington Township's sewer director is confirming with their Mayor and Council on this as well. He would like Council to grant permission to continue working on this and to get amendments to our Ordinance. Council agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

ACTION

A. Resolution 2021-67, Award Administrative Services Contract, Tax Office to J.H. Services

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Ostrander to approve Resolution No. 2021-67.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

B. Resolution 2021-68, Award Special Projects Planner Contract to Mark Remsa, PP, LLA, AICP

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Woolston to approve Resolution No. 2021-68.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

C. Resolution 2021-69, Request Extension of Time to Award a Contract for Potts Mill Road II

Engineer Ted Wilkinson explained that the DOT has a regulation in their agreements that we have 24 months to officially award the project. The job was awarded back in March of 2019 so we are exactly at the two-year mark. The NJDOT agreed to a six-month extension and we are going to have a Resolution delivered to Cherry Hill tomorrow. He is hoping to advertise and award the job immediately.

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Resolution No. 2021-69.

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Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

D. Resolution 2021-70, Approve 3-Year Average of Anticipated Revenues

Administrator Fazekas explained that as we are preparing the budget, there is certain budget anticipated revenue ratio that we anticipated with COVID. The State of New Jersey is allowing towns to go back and do a three-year average of those certain revenues and you can use that average as the anticipated revenue for this year if you need to do so instead of just using last year's revenue. It has been requested by our CFO to go forward with that.

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to approve Resolution No. 2021-70.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

E. Resolution 2021-71, Emergency Temporary Appropriations

Administrator Fazekas stated that we are working on the Temporary Budget with the hope to have the budget for first reading at the first Council meeting in April. There are certain line items that we are starting to get a little tight on with the funding of the Temporary Budget. Within the State of New Jersey you can do a temporary authorization to exceed that amount by Resolution.

Motion of Sandusky, seconded by Ostrander to approve Resolution No. 2021-71.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Garganio
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Garganio opened the meeting up to the public at this time.

Don Kamienski, 10 McCay Drive, asked Mayor Wilkie if, in the video he shared on the Route 130 corridor improvements, they stated that there were 17,000 vehicles per day on Florence-Columbus Road? If the answer is yes, they all have to go through that roundabout that is proposed and there is going to be a traffic jam.

Mayor Wilkie stated that he can not confirm or deny that is the number that was said, but he believes that is the number of vehicles mentioned.

Kristan Marter, 220 East Front Street, asked about Cumberland Street that goes into Tuscan Dairy off of Route 130, where the state plan shows the narrowing of the road. She is going to address the NJDOT because you will not want to narrow from three lanes to two right at an intersection where there are a lot of trucks turning into Tuscan Dairy. When she spoke to Joe Brickley about that initially, he said that the

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issue there is that property belongs to the New Jersey Turnpike. Once you have to go on to the New Jersey Turnpike property, it really slows things down. Her thought was how we can avoid that at that intersection. When she looked at our tax maps there is a street on our tax map called Airy Street and Parkside which is owned by the Dairy. She is wondering if we are able to do something with that land to eliminate that issue as a township plan instead of a county or turnpike plan. She thought that it could alleviate some of the issues with that area.

Mayor Wilkie explained that he heard not too long ago that Garelik Farms was filing Chapter 11 and that they were going bankrupt so they are refinancing. When we did the study in 2013 to put an area in need of redevelopment, it was that business where we said they need to make the front of that place a lot better. He said that he remembers them coming to us at some point to put a walkway in so that their employees could safely get from their site towards Parkside. That is an area is a much better location if they have the finances to do it. In regards to the turnpike, the drafts were shared by the county in the summer of last year and before meeting with the state they asked for comments and when they met with the state the comments we shared were not included in there. He knows there are some wetlands that will have to be dealt with but she came up with a nice solution and it would be good to move in that direction.

Ms. Marter also asked about the whirly bird and the design that the county was considering to go out to John Galt Way and the second design where it would come out of the side of the whirly bird. She had talked to them back in 2018 about trying to do something to straighten out the whirly bird and they said that the problem is that it is egg shaped. They have come up with some way to do something with the whirly bird to round it out and she said they wanted to bring it down to a "T." She said that a T wouldn't make a lot of sense because as soon as you stop traffic coming onto that road, you would create a backup. They have a lot of ideas for that area and they are trying to put some sort of a sidewalk and it makes a lot of sense which, in turn, will help to get the truck traffic off of Delaware Avenue.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to close the public portion of the meeting. Voice vote – All ayes.

Before adjournment of the meeting Councilman Baldorossi asked about rec sports. Administrator Fazekas said that all protocols are in place. The Recreation Director informed the various leagues in town that the spring sports can commence as of Saturday and that includes the use of the fields.

Council President Garganio asked Ted Wilkinson about the creek on the steel plant site near where Project Freedom will be and if there was any type of procedure or process where that could be brought back to be used more for entertainment, fishing, etc. and if he can get us a report on that. Mr. Wilkinson agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to adjourn. Voice vote – all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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